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Centipedes in the Diet of Salamanders

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Centipedes have been reported often from salamander stomachs but the centipedes so collected were not identified to species. This renders difficult any mature consideration of their role as a possible link in food chains dominated by salamanders. For example, centipedes have been reported by Cochran (1911) in the stomachs of fifteen salamanders examined by her. Since they were not present in the majority of stomachs she did not consider these arthropods typical items of salamander diet. Blanchard (1928) examined seventy salamander stomachs in a study of the life history of *Plethodon cinereus* Green and did not find any centipedes. Bishop (1941) reported centipedes as part of the diet of various New York salamanders. Jameson (1944) analyzed the stomachs of 169 *Plethodon cinereus* Green and found nine centipedes in eight of the stomachs examined. These nine centipedes comprised 2.4 per cent of the total food by volume. The general impression gained from these later studies is that centipedes may be eaten by certain salamanders often enough to warrant some consideration.

On October 13, 1951 a series of salamanders of the species *Ambystoma jeffersonianum* (Green) was collected in a cut-over sycamore-sugar maple-basswood forest near Chesterton, Porter County, Indiana. The stomach contents of these salamanders were examined and analyzed, and yielded one intact specimen of the lithobiid centipede *Bothropolys multidentatus* (Newport). *B. multidentatus* is widely distributed in the deciduous forest biome of eastern North America. It is most frequently found underneath the bark of decaying logs or underneath the logs themselves (Auerbach, 1951). These habitat niches are essentially the same for the salamanders and this could account for centipedes being present on occasion in the amphibian's stomach. Lithobiid centipedes are relatively fast-moving arthropods that might elude terrest-

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rial salamanders even though the latter are adapted for feeding upon small, relatively agile prey.

The writer feels that this record is of interest, although it does not justify sweeping conclusions as to the position of centipedes in the diet of terrestrial salamanders.

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